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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to present some principles, assumptions, and techniques that might be useful for inservice teacher educators or prospective teachers. Teacher educators should try first of all to focus on teachers' understandings of situations in order to help make those understandings more appropriate, more accurate, deeper, and more finely differentiated than they had been before. Beyond this, they should focus on strengthening desirable dispositions, maintaining competencies already acquired, building long-term relationships, and providing moderate amounts of inspiration and encouragement so long as it is specifically related to the work setting. Inservice teacher educators should try to further the goals implied by these principles through certain general techniques; i.e., these educators need to: (1) maintain an optimum distance from the teachers they are instructing; (2) cultivate the habit of suspending judgment; (3) phrase suggestions in experimental form; (4) avoid the temptation to stop pattern behavior; (5) help teachers define their job so that its objectives are achievable; (6) serve as a neutralizer of conflicts; (7) use demonstrations of skills; (8) share their understanding of how teachers see them; and (9) resist the temptation to "use" or exploit teachers. General information about the ERIC system and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education is included. Contains 10 references. (MDM)

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by

Lilian G. Katz, Ph.D.

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education

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HELPING OTHERS WITH THEIR TEACHING

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INTRODUCTION

Most programs for young children make provision for the continuing education of staff members. Those who provide continuing education may be directors of Head Start programs or day care centers; they may be Child Development Associate (CDA) field trainers, supervisors of student teaching, consultants, curriculum specialists, or others. In the work of all individuals filling such roles aimed at helping others with their teaching, similar situations, issues, and problems arise, and similar decisions and choices have to be made.

The purpose of this discussion is to present some principles, assumptions, and techniques that might be useful for teacher educators, whether working with inservice teachers or caregivers, CDAs, or even prospective teachers. Typically, the participant in inservice education is not in the traditional student role of working with an abstract or

theoretical set of topics organized into formal lectures. Instead, the learner is usually an adult with strong involvement in the subject and object of the interaction—namely, his or her own teaching behavior.

Throughout this discussion, the term "principle" is used as defined by R. S. Peters (1970) to mean that which makes a consideration relevant. As such, principles are like decision rules, which help to guide choices among alternative courses of action. They are not ironclad, fail-safe rules to be applied mindlessly, but are intended to be qualified by such phrases as "under some circumstances" or "as the situation warrants." Although these phrases are not mentioned repeatedly below, each principle outlined in the following discussion should be considered with appropriate qualifiers in mind.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF FOCUS

All of us who teach, at whatever level, have to face the fact that we cannot offer our learners all the possible advice, suggestions, commentary, or information that might be helpful or instructive to them. When we work with people in any situation, we constantly make choices concerning the nature of the interactions we have. Like all teaching, the work involved in helping others with their teaching is embedded in relationships. It is useful to assume that relationships have to have content and that people cannot just "relate" without some content that is of mutual or shared interest or concern. In the case of professional relationships, the content is about something outside of the two or more individuals in the relationship.

The potential contents of human relationships are so large and broad that some decisions must be made concerning which content is most relevant, appropriate, and useful at any given time in any given situation. Similarly, there are probably more than a dozen "right" or effective ways to respond in any given situation—and probably just as many ineffective ways. Since we cannot respond in all the ways that are possible, choices have to be made. Some choices are made by invoking tradition (e.g., this is how we have always done it). Others are made because it is thought that teachers either want or expect them, or will attend carefully to them. Some choices reflect philosophical commitments. The principles outlined below are recommended for use when considering what content to focus on when interacting with the teachers and student teachers we want to help.

1. Focus on Teachers' Understandings of Situations

The term "understandings" is used here to refer to teachers' ideas, thoughts, constructions, concepts, assumptions, or schemas about such things as how children learn, what "works," how they affect their pupils, what they expect of themselves, what others expect of them, their roles, their duties, and so forth. Perhaps the most useful course of action available to inservice educators may be to focus on helping teachers develop understandings of their work that are more appropriate, more accurate, deeper, and more finely differentiated than they had previously been (see Katz, 1977b). The rationale underlying this principle is that the focus on understandings helps the teacher acquire knowledge, ideas, insights, or information he or she can keep and use after the inservice educator has left the scene.

Directives, prescriptions, instructions, or even "orders" might also address the problem the teacher is trying to cope

with, but their value is likely to be of short duration. It seems reasonable to assume that modified understandings are more likely than prescriptions and directives to help teachers to generate appropriate new behaviors by themselves. To illustrate, one teacher complained that she had been unable to stop one of her kindergartners from persistent hitting of several others in her class. When asked what approaches she had tried so far, she explained that she had already hit the boy as hard as she dared in order to "show him how much hitting hurts." In such a situation, the inservice educator might want simply to prohibit the teacher's hitting by citing a rule or regulation or a philosophical position.

However, the teacher's understanding of a kindergartner's ability to learn, when the kindergartner suffers pain after he or she has been hit, that it is important not to hit others seems inadequate. In this case, the teacher's understanding of the situation she is trying to cope with could be improved by suggesting to her that when adults hurt children (by hitting them) and provide a model for hurting others, they are unlikely to convince children not to do so as well. Such a principle concerning the adult as a model of desirable and undesirable conduct applies to many situations other than the specific one in question.

Other aspects of this teacher's understanding of children's responses to censure and her knowledge of alternative ways of handling the disruptive behavior of children might also be addressed by the inservice educator. While a directive or school district regulation might change the teacher's behavior in a particular incident, only modification of understandings is likely to have enduring value or to serve as a basis for more appropriate action in subsequent similar situations.

Inservice educators often struggle with the question of how directive they should be. They frequently try to relate as "equals" to the teachers they are trying to help. While they

are equal in most respects (e.g., they are equally adults, professionals, educators, citizens, etc.), it is taken to be a general principle that the role of any teacher—in this case the inservice educator—is legitimized by the fact that a teacher is someone whose understandings of the phenomenon of interest are better in certain ways than those of the learner. That is to say, an inservice educator is someone who has more useful, appropriate, accurate, or differentiated understandings than the teacher being helped. The tacit acknowledgment that such differences exist legitimizes the educator's right and authority to provide inservice training.

2. Focus on Strengthening Desirable Dispositions

Widespread enthusiasm for performance-based teacher education, and for competency-based education in general, seems to be associated with the risk of underemphasizing the development of learners' desirable dispositions. Dispositions, as defined here, include relatively stable "habits of mind" or tendencies to respond to one's experiences or to given situations in certain ways.

In deciding what responses to make to teachers, it is reasonable for teacher educators to choose those that are likely to strengthen enduring dispositions thought to be related to effective teaching. Examples of such dispositions include openness to children's ideas and feelings, inventiveness or resourcefulness, patience (i.e., longer reaction times), friendliness, and enthusiasm.

Dispositions likely to undermine effective teaching include tendencies to be impetuous, unfriendly, hypercritical, rejecting, racist, sexist, and so forth. Two suppositions provide the rationale for this principle. First, as already suggested, it seems obvious that we cannot teach all the knowledge, skills, methods, techniques, etc., that are of

potential use to teachers. This being the case, it seems advisable to teach teachers and caregivers in such a way as to strengthen their dispositions to go on learning, and to be inventive long after the inservice educator's work with them is over. Second, while we indeed want to help teachers with specific pedagogical skills and methods, it is important to do so without undermining their dispositions to be resourceful and "self-helpful." In short, we should guard against helping a teacher acquire competencies in a way that might engender or strengthen a disposition to be dependent or helpless.

3. Focus on Maintaining Competencies Already Acquired

In our eagerness to be "change agents," we may overlook the possibility that the teachers we work with may already have the competencies appropriate for, or required of, a given situation. Indeed, Gliessman (1984) has suggested that virtually all of the component skills of teaching are within the repertoires of most people, whether they have anything to do with teaching or not. People know how to listen, explain, give directions, state rules, etc., without professional training. Training is intended to mobilize already available skills into coherent and appropriate patterns for teaching.

Thus, the focus of inservice education should be on helping teachers use already available competencies more reliably, consistently, appropriately, or confidently. For example, a kindergarten teacher might be sufficiently skilled at guiding a discussion with pupils but may vary too greatly in his performance from one occasion to the next. If so, he probably does not require a training module on discussion skills, but would perhaps benefit from a fuller or better understanding of the causes of his own performance fluctuations, or from assistance in becoming more alert to cues that cause him to perform in ways that—as the saying

goes—he "knows better" than to do! He might be helped, at least temporarily, by the suggestion that he refrain from leading discussions except when classroom conditions are optimal. In that way, the teacher may be able to consolidate and strengthen mastery of a skill he already has before trying it out under less than optimal conditions. Similarly, teachers of young children are often exhorted to "listen" to the children. It is reasonable to assume that all teachers have such listening competencies in their repertoires, although they may employ them inappropriately or inconsistently.

In yet another case, a teacher may have the skills required to deal with a given situation but fail to use them with sufficient confidence to be effective. For example, if the teacher's actions betray a lack of confidence when she is setting limits or redirecting or stopping disruptive behavior, children may perceive mixed signals, challenge her, and thus exacerbate the situation, causing her already low confidence to decrease further. In such cases, the inservice educator's role becomes one of "shaping" or supporting the teacher's efforts to practice and strengthen already available behavior, rather than focusing on the acquisition of new competencies.

4. Focus on Building Long-Term Relationships

This principle refers to those situations in which an observation of a teacher prompts us to offer "corrections." Sometimes, in our eagerness to be helpful and to establish our own credibility, we may offer corrections too hastily. Although in certain situations it may be appropriate to make corrections, there is often the risk of losing the opportunity to go on helping that teacher over a longer period of time by alienating him or her through premature corrections. The principle of withholding correction is not a matter of the "rightness" of the advice but of allowing sufficient trust to

develop between the inservice educator and the teacher so that the advice can be seen as an offer of help rather than as a criticism from an outside expert.

5. Focus on Providing Moderate Amounts of Inspiration

Many of the teachers we are trying to help can cope admirably with the complex tasks and responsibilities they face. They may not require new techniques, modules, packages, or gimmicks, although they may believe them necessary, but simply need occasional renewals of courage to enable them to sustain their efforts and to maintain enough enthusiasm to keep working at an unglamorous and often under-appreciated job. Excessive sapping of courage or enthusiasm, at times approaching depression (i.e., believing one's efforts have no effect), is a potential cause of ineffectiveness, no matter how many competencies the teacher has. Such ineffectiveness may depress enthusiasm and courage even further, which in turn may again decrease effectiveness, initiating a downward spiral. The inservice educator may be able to intervene in the downward spiral by providing moderate inspiration, encouragement, and support.

It seems important that the inspirational message be specifically related to the work setting and its characteristics rather than be a generalized message of good will. It is also suggested that supportive and encouraging messages contain real and useful information about the significance of the teacher's efforts. For example, it is likely to be more useful to say something like, "Those new activities really seemed to intrigue the older children in your class," than to say, "You're doing great." Furthermore, it may be wise to provide inspiration in optimum rather than maximum amounts so that teachers do not become "hooked" or dependent on it, thus undermining their dispositions to be self-helpful in the long run.

GENERAL TECHNIQUES FOR WORKING WITH TEACHERS

The principles outlined above are intended as overall guides or decision-making rules to help inservice educators select appropriate responses to inservice teaching situations. The general techniques described briefly below are intended to help the inservice educator to further the goals implied by those principles.

1. Maintain an Optimum Distance

Many educators consider closeness, warmth, and supportiveness essential and valuable attributes of their relationships with learners. Research seems to support the contention that warmth, for example, is related to teacher effectiveness whether at the school or inservice level. However, inservice educators may be tempted to make the error of being too close to the teachers for whom they are responsible. An optimum rather than maximum or minimum distance is recommended for several reasons. First, excessive closeness may inhibit or limit the teacher educator's ability to evaluate the teacher's progress realistically. Indeed, in such cases the teacher educator may be unable to help the teacher confront serious weaknesses or may fail to perceive the weaknesses at all. Second, if the teacher educator becomes too close to the teacher, he or she may unintentionally impinge on the teacher's right to privacy, a right deserving protection.

Third, there is some danger that, if the teacher educator becomes too close to one of the teachers in a group, the

tendency to make inadvertently disparaging remarks about another teacher in the group may be great, and credibility and effectiveness may thus be undermined. Fourth, if the relationships between teacher educators and teachers become too close or involved, emotional "burn-out" may occur within a few months (Maslach & Pines, 1977). Not only may excessive personal stress be the result, but also effectiveness on the job may suffer. Minimum (versus optimum) closeness occurs when the educator's distance from the teacher or student teacher is too great. This is would be manifested by coldness or aloofness, and is unlikely to provide a relationship in which growth and development can occur.

2. Cultivate the Habit of Suspending Judgment

There is a strong tendency among those of us who are teachers to pass judgment on what we see in the classroom. We tend not only to judge the rightness or goodness of what we see, but also to assess whether the teacher is doing things "my way" or not. Such judgments seem to come naturally! However, if the intention is to stimulate and support someone's development, then instead of passing judgment, it may be more to the point to ask oneself questions like the following: How can I account for what I am observing? Why is the teacher responding to the situation in this way? and, Why is this happening? In seeking answers to such questions, rather than judging the events observed, teacher educators are much more likely to learn those things that will increase their capacity to help a teacher. Answering such questions allows teacher educators to discover possible causes of a teacher's observed behavior. Each possible cause be examined for plausibility, and when a reasonably plausible cause has been identified, an appropriate method for helping the teacher can be selected and tried.

This technique is recommended for several reasons. First, it includes two features. It can help us resist the temptation to pass judgment and at the same time can encourage us to inspect our observations more closely. This in turn can help to slow down our responses to the situation, thereby reducing any tendency to overreact. Second, asking how the observed behavior might be accounted for is likely to lead to learning more about the people we are trying to help, and thus to increase insight into how the teacher defines the situation.

Obviously, there are many possible reasons why teachers do what they do. Sometimes the teacher's reason for a given action is that it appears to "work," or perhaps a given action is all the teacher knows how to do in a particular situation. Often, teachers take certain actions because they think that the director or the principal wants them to behave this way, even though that may not necessarily be the case. Some teachers do what they do because they think that others, such as parents, evaluators, colleagues, or visitors want them to do it; or because their own teachers did these particular things; or because these things are simply traditional; and so forth.

Inservice educators' attempts to account for the observed behavior of a teacher should help them to make more informed decisions about what to do next to help the teacher. The technique of suspending judgment is related to the more general principle of timing (Katz, 1977b), namely, that the longer the latency before a teacher responds to the learner, the more information the teacher has and the more likely he or she is to make better decisions about the next steps. This latency principle seems especially relevant to inservice educators because they often enter classrooms "off the streets," so to speak, with little if any prior information concerning the antecedents of the situation observed. The temptation to pass judgment rapidly may lead to important errors in assessing teacher needs and competencies.

3. Phrase Suggestions in Experimental Form

Most teaching involves occasions when the most appropriate response to the learner is to make a suggestion. When giving suggestions to teachers, it is helpful to phrase them in the following form: "Next time X comes up, try Y, and see if it helps." Depending on the situation, it might be good to add something such as "X helps some teachers in this kind of situation—but if you find it doesn't seem to help, we can talk about something else to try."

This technique is recommended for several reasons. First, it can be expected to strengthen the teacher's dispositions to be experimental and resourceful. Furthermore, when a suggestion is offered with the implication that it is the one solution or the only answer to the problem, and if attempts to use it subsequently fail, the teacher's sense of frustration and defeat may be intensified rather than diminished. Similarly, it is advisable to make suggestions that the individual teacher can be expected to try successfully. If suggestions require much greater sophistication than the teacher has, then the consequences are very likely to be feelings of failure and a greater sense of helplessness or incompetence. Suggestions should be phrased in such a way that, in those instances—which will inevitably occur—in which the suggestion is not successful, the teacher can understand the reasons why failure resulted.

Another reason for recommending this technique is that when suggestions are made in terms of what to try "next time," the likelihood of humiliating or embarrassing the teacher about the incident just observed is minimized. Some inservice educators are so eager to get teachers to analyze their own "mistakes" following an unsuccessful teaching episode that they might inadvertently embarrass them, which

in turn could undermine the teachers' dispositions to go on learning, trying, inventing, and seeking the best methods for themselves.

4. Avoid the Temptation to Stop Pattern Behavior

From time to time we observe teacher behavior that we think should be stopped "cold." While the teacher educator's position may indeed be right, a two-step approach toward such situations may be helpful. First, we can ask in such situations whether the behavior observed really endangers any child. If the answer is a clear "yes," then the second step is to use all the resources at our disposal to bring the behavior to a halt. If the answer is ambiguous ("maybe") or if the answer is "no," then the next step is to help the teacher to try out and practice alternative strategies with which to replace or supplement the old patterns.

If we succeed in stopping a teacher's behavior in advance of sufficient mastery of a new pattern, he or she may be left without alternative methods of coping with the situation. This situation may cause the children's behavior to become more unacceptable and increase the teacher's own feelings of frustration and failure. Occasionally, this sequence of events is followed by a type of "backlash" (i.e., a strengthened conviction that the old pattern was really the right one after all).

5. Help Teachers Define Their Job so that Its Objectives Are Achievable

From time to time, inservice educators work with teachers who have defined their jobs so that they have to achieve every possible educational objective, or to achieve objectives which are almost humanly impossible to achieve. For example, many teachers of young children think their job

requires them to "love all the children" in their classrooms. It is reasonable to assume that they do not have to love or even like all the children they teach--though they do have to respect them all. The latter is not always easy, but is far more achievable than universal love!

The point is that when teachers define their jobs so that the probability or potential for achievement (and therefore satisfaction) is very low, they are likely to experience decreases in responsivity and sensitivity, which lessen effectiveness. Diminished effectiveness can, in turn, lead to feelings of depression, which further diminishes effort and hence achievement and satisfaction. Thus, a downward spiral seems inevitable (Seligman, 1975).

In such cases, the inservice educator can assist teachers by helping them to clarify their own purposes and to settle on some boundaries for their responsibilities and authority. Successful assistance along these lines should lead to the teacher's increased sense of effectiveness and satisfaction, which in turn should increase responsiveness and sensitivity. This increased responsiveness and sensitivity is then likely to foster heightened effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction.

6. Serve as a Neutralizer of Conflicts

Once in a while, inservice educators find themselves trying to help teachers in a situation marked by within-staff conflicts. In such situations, we are often tempted to align ourselves with one side or the other. If we give in to that temptation, we may lose our effectiveness in the long run. The technique that seems useful on such occasions is to remind the contentious parties as gracefully as possible of their superordinate and shared objectives, to encourage them to keep their minds and energies focused on their long-range, common responsibilities. Similarly, it seems useful to resist

the temptation to follow up rumors or in any other way to transfer potentially inflammatory information. It is also helpful to avoid reinforcing complaining behavior. One has to sort out and determine which complaints are legitimate and deserve to be followed up and which ones simply reflect the possibility that complaining is, for some people, the only way they know to get others' attention.

7. Use Demonstrations of Skills

The technique of cautiously modeling behavior or practices is a useful tool for inservice educators, and opportunities to demonstrate one's skills are often also opportunities to strengthen one's credibility as an educator. But modeling is not without some risks. For example, many inservice educators have had the experience of entering a day care center or preschool class in which (for whatever reason) the situation is out of control. Because we have worked with children for many years, we may know how to bring order to the scene in a flash. In addition, being a relative stranger may increase our power to obtain compliance from young children. But such a demonstration of skill may cause some teachers to look at the scene and say to themselves, "I'll never be that good," or "Why is it so easy for her or him?" and to become even more discouraged and insecure. Or, in the case of demonstrating our skill with older children, the risk occasionally exists that the demonstration will make the teacher look incompetent in the eyes of the pupils. Both of these potentially negative consequences of demonstration must be carefully weighed against the positive value of modeling good practices and enhancing credibility.

8. Share Your Understanding of How a Teacher Sees You

Keep in mind that we do not always know how the teachers we work with perceive us. We know that we are kind and warm, sincere and helpful, generous and giving, and so forth! But we are unlikely to be perceived that way in all situations. Some teachers may be afraid of us or unnerved by our presence, even though we do not see ourselves as threatening in any way. If we sense that these kinds of feelings are generated by our presence, it is helpful to let the teacher know that we understand these feelings; that we have also experienced similar feelings; and that we realize teachers might look at us with apprehension, suspicion, or even fear. Acknowledging the potential for such perceptions may be a technique by which to diffuse the excessive stress teachers sometimes experience when they are observed. Furthermore, the shared insight might clear the way to selecting more useful and constructive content for the relationship between the teacher and the inservice educator.

9. Resist the Temptation to "Use" Teachers

Some inservice educators are especially intent on getting something accomplished for the children and seem to construe the situation as "getting to the kids through the teachers." If we want to help children (and no doubt we do), then we should do so directly instead of trying to "use" teachers. The focus should be on helping the teachers as persons worthy of our concern and caring in their own right. It is useful to define the role of teacher educator as someone who helps and works with teachers for their own sakes. When we do that wholeheartedly and well, the children will surely benefit also.

CONCLUSION

In the course of employing the principles and techniques enumerated here, several assumptions that underlie the application of these principles might be pointed out. First, it seems useful to assume that not all teachers can be helped by any one teacher educator. Occasionally, an assignment includes a teacher who constitutes a "chronic case" for a given teacher educator. Such a teacher drains large portions of energy, and somehow nothing really seems to help. While this teacher seems to be taking much time and thought, and making no progress, there are other teachers we are responsible for who are ready and waiting to respond to our help and to make developmental advances with relatively modest efforts on our part.

On such occasions, it is a good idea to take the time to think through very deliberately whether or not we see any potential for growth for this teacher under our guidance. We ask ourselves, Do I see any potential for development in this teacher through my own efforts? If the assessment is ultimately a positive one, then we can make a "go" decision and mobilize all the professional resources available for the task at hand. If the assessment is ultimately negative, then we can make a "no-go" decision and make every effort to refer this teacher to other teacher educators, agents, or sources of assistance.

The usefulness of the assumption that none of us can teach everyone equally effectively resides mainly in the apparent effects of scrutinizing one's own thoughts and feelings about the case and making a clear choice or "go/no-go" decision. Once the decision has been made, then the energy drained in agonizing over the chronic case seems to become available for work with those teachers who are

ready to respond to our help. Indeed, the content of a relationship that is chronically unsatisfying becomes focused on the pain and frustrations it engenders instead of on the problems of improving the teacher's effectiveness. Furthermore, it appears that when a "go" decision has been made, we begin to notice some positive attributes of the teacher in question. (Such positive attributes were there before, but we overlooked them by focusing on the chronic aspects of the relationship.) This awareness in turn tends to improve our responses, which in turn seems to lead to more positive responses on the teacher's part. Thus, a positive "snowball" can be set into motion by engaging in deliberate scrutiny of our own thinking about the difficult or chronic cases we encounter.

Furthermore, it seems useful always to hold to the assumption that every teacher we work with has an inner life of concerns, dreams, wishes, fantasies, hopes, aspirations, and so forth, just like all of us. We do not have to know the content of that life. But if we respect the fact that it is there, we are more likely to treat the teacher with dignity and with respect, an approach not only essential in teaching but also ethically sound.

Another useful assumption is that every teaching decision contains its own potential errors. If, as suggested above, we decide not to correct a teacher for the sake of building a long-term relationship, we may make the error of letting the teacher continue to perform incorrectly. If we correct the teacher immediately, we risk the error of undermining a relationship that could stimulate significant long-term development and affect a teacher's entire career. Similarly, if we demonstrate to a teacher our own skills in working with children, we may strengthen our credibility, but we may make the error of causing the teacher to feel ashamed or less confident of his or her own competence. On the other hand,

if we pass by opportunities to demonstrate our skills, what we teach may be discounted as coming from an inadequate, high-minded, and impractical or naive source; therefore, our ideas and suggestions may be dismissed out of hand.

Until such time as we can devise approaches and techniques that are error free, we might accept the assumption that every choice or decision contains some errors. We can then think through what those errors might be and select the ones we prefer to make. This assumption should free us to make deliberate choices about the appropriate content of our relationships with the teacher we work with and to proceed with sufficient confidence to help them strengthen their own teaching abilities and self-confidence.

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The ERIC System

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national education information network designed to provide education information users with ready access to an extensive body of education-related literature. Established in 1966, ERIC is supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

The ERIC database is created by the 16 clearinghouses in the ERIC system. This database is the world's largest source of education information, containing more than 800,000 summaries of documents and journal articles on education research and practice. ERIC offers a document delivery service for the documents it collects and summarizes, many of which are unpublished.

The ERIC database can be used by consulting the print indexes *Resources in Education* (*RIE*) and *Current Index to Journals in Education* (*CIJE*) at more than 2,800 libraries and other locations worldwide; by using online search services (usually for a fee); by accessing ERIC at several sites on the Internet; by searching ERIC on CD-ROM at many libraries and information centers; or on the local computer systems of a growing number of universities and colleges. The database is updated monthly online and quarterly on CD-ROM. For more information on how to access the ERIC database, call ACCESS ERIC at its toll free number, 1-800-LET-ERIC. ACCESS ERIC informs callers of the services and products offered by ERIC components and other education information service providers.

The ERIC System, through its 16 subject-specific clearinghouses and four support components, provides a

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In response to queries from the general public, the clearinghouse provides free materials, short searches of the ERIC database, and referrals to other information sources when appropriate. Other clearinghouse services include conducting workshops and making presentations; providing camera-ready materials for conferences; and conducting extensive computer searches (for a fee) on topics related to the clearinghouse scope of interest.

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